**Counseling Corner**  
The new year is a very busy time as we not only invest more time in our SEL lessons, but also attend to planning for the next year! Our 8th graders will turn their thoughts to high school registration, with Gunn counselors presenting in early February and Paly counselors in early March. 6th and 7th grade parents are invited to our Elective night (Feb 5). Our 6th grade just received a lesson on cyber safety, while advisory is focusing on Growth Mindset for 7th graders, along with using Naviance for exploring and learning about career interests for both 7th and 8th graders. And the circle continues as we welcome our incoming 6th graders in early February to our Fletcher community!

**Library**  
The Fletcher Library Book-a-Thon (completely optional) has started! Last year, 363 Fletcher students pledged to read, and the number of books read was 2216! Please encourage your child to check Fletcher Library Schoology to sign-up by the February 19 deadline, no exceptions! • Our Youth Refugee event featuring Newberry medalist Katherine Applegate, two Rohingya refugee brothers, Terry Fletcher, and their sponsor Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County was an unqualified success. • Applegate’s *Home of the Brave* about a Sudanese refugee mirrors some of the experiences *brothers Robi and Noor* shared with us about finding safety in America, while Ellen Fletcher’s daughter gave us a more personal look into her mother’s journey as a German child escaping Nazi Germany through the KinderTransport program and surviving the Holocaust—but not without the difficulties of being a refugee. Thank you to Katherine for donating 200 copies of *Home of the Brave*, staying to chat and signing books long into the evening, and to Books Inc., the Palo Alto City Library, and Catholic Charities for providing tables with information for attendees to peruse. Fletcher PTA members and donors: thank you for sponsoring this inspirational event!

**SOCIAL STUDIES**  
8th grade students are in the midst of a project based civic assignment. After identifying an issue of concern, students are creating a bill for E-Congress (sponsored by the Univ of Virginia). Soon our classrooms will act as mock congressional committees reviewing bills from students around the country. Fletcher student bills will also be considered by other students Finally, all bills that survive the committee process will be voted on by all participating classrooms. It seems we have future legislators in the making! This is a powerful experience, no?

7th grade is studying Medieval Japan. We are looking at how Japan was influenced by Korea and China, but eventually developed its own unique culture. These cross-cultural influences are alive in our world today, and how fortunate for our students to make these connections. The Summative assessment is an argumentative paragraph where students will debate whether the Samurai’s identity was solely that of a warrior or if they were more than warriors. If you haven’t seen The Cantor Museum’s permanent exhibit of samurai “armour” it is quite beautiful.

**National Geographic Geography Bee:** All grades participated in the National Geographic’s Geography Bee. The finals were held on 22 January 2020, and live streamed for advisories to watch. Congratulations to our champion 8th grader Jake Seley! 8th grader Benjamin Vakil was runner up. 8th grader Amann Mahajan was third place, and 7th grader Sauram Vasanawala came in 4th. Well done Fletcher students! Now where is Hodunk?
Visual & Performing Arts  Lots of performances happening in January and February—the SoCal benefit concert, CMEA Jazz Festival at Gunn, Winter Band and Orchestra concerts, and not to be missed: the Gunn Choir-Staff musical! This special performance includes both the JLS and Fletcher choirs (Feb 11-12, and performances sell out quickly). • Recent visits from Gunn painting/illustration and ceramics teachers gave our students a peek into high school art programs. For many students this is the path to finding their communities in a large school.

ELECTIVES: Marine Biology uses Gyotaku
Marine Biology, an elective class introduced a few years ago, began this semester exploring the size, shape and anatomical parts of a bony fish. Blending some art techniques with scientific observations, students enjoyed a fish printing project which borrowed from the traditional Japanese “gyotaku” art. Stop by H9 for a look at these interesting prints. Marine Bio students are presently diving into algae! Students, are you looking to extend an interest in marine bio? Along with our Monterey Bay and SF Steinhart Aquariums, try Fitzgerald Marine Reserve located near Half Moon Bay just off Highway 1, or you might even consider your own science observation tank at home!

Explorations in Technology builds medieval Siege engine!
The advanced “IT” class is tackling a bit of civil engineering by designing and constructing their own trebuchets. There are some amusing videos online if you’d like to watch a full-scale trebuchet in action—England’s Warwick Castle trebuchet is the world’s largest! Does your student know, “What took the place of trebuchets?” And although all trebuchets are catapults, not all catapults are trebuchets. What is the difference?

Science  Put March 25 6:30–8:00 pm on your calendar for our Fletcher STEAM FAIR. The fair will feature science projects, tech challenges, engineering feats, artistic displays, and math problems. Watch for more information to come through PTA and our website. • Our 7th grade students are studying the ever-interesting field of cells, genetics, and heredity. Ask about the analogy poster, “How is a castle like a cell?” or “What is a phenotype, and how did DNA mutations affect the phenotype of your bird?” • 8th graders are exploring phase changes, and how they are linked to molecular motion and temperature. Ask your student how the motion of molecules is different in ice, liquid water and water vapor! What type of phase change does dry ice make? Why can you get a worse burn from steam than boiling water? (Hint: It has to do with the condensation of gas back into a liquid.)

English Learner Program:  Academic Language Development (ALD) Class
Unlike a spontaneous, emotional argument, our ALD students have been focusing on thoughtful argumentative writing this month. While reading non-fiction articles related to single-use plastic water bottles and the plastic bag debate, students have focused on identifying and explaining an author’s claim and reasoning in preparation for their own writing. Having finished evaluating their sources, students are now in the middle of writing a five-paragraph argumentative essay in which they will present claims, reasons, evidence, and counterarguments. Along with developing logical thinking and skills of persuasion, argumentative writing prepares our EL students for the March ELPAC (English Language Proficiency Assessment for California). Ask your student: What do you think about single-use plastic water bottles? Do you think we should ban plastic bags? Why?

6th Grade Core  Weather is a topic for our scientific community, and our 6th graders are getting into that conversation too, folding in geographical forms with it. While studying the foundations of our weather, we hope this will prompt some discussions at home. “What is the difference between weather and climate?” And “What does it mean to have a cold front versus a warm front?” • Students are immersed in touring Egypt, meeting the pharaohs, making sense of hieroglyphics, and admiring such monuments as The Great Pyramid and White Chapel along the way. Soon our students will be heading to ancient Israel. Has anyone seen my Red Sea scrolls?
PE  Winter is here but our (largely dry) weather is still allowing for some energetic outdoor
soccer, basketball, and "much-loved" and required California Physical Fitness Testing. Don't give
up on improving your mile time! Indoors, your students are still enjoying court games, gym
activities, and even making up their own games. Exercise—especially for our middle school
students—supports a balance between the intellectual and physical parts of life. We're lucky to
live in this climate, so take the time to get outside for a walk at the baylands, attending a Gunn
sporting event, or even a family walk around your neighborhood.

STUDENT LEADERSHIP  Fletcher's NEON NIGHTS Dance is TONIGHT, 1/31 from
7pm-9pm. Students will be encouraged to wear all their brightest clothing, and have tons of fun!

Coming Soon: Fletcher Staff vs Student basketball game! Will Mr. Helsaple foul out? Will Mrs.
Ginanni hit her 3-pointer? Will they do anything to win? What score do you predict? Students
and staff, don't miss the fun @ Lunch in the Gym the week of 2/3. These are some of the best
moments!

Thank you to all our STUDENTS who've elected to join Student Council and Leadership classes to
help shape your middle school experience. Things don't happen without people who care and put
in the time. Thanks for doing your part to build this community, and keep it up!

Extra Supports:
Special SE services for incoming 6th graders & rising Freshmen
We are looking forward to our upcoming 8th - 9th grade Transition IEP meetings with Gunn High
School staff. These meetings provide an opportunity for parents and students to hear about the
special education services provided at Gunn, including ..... We will also be meeting individually
with 5th grade families to welcome them to Fletcher.

Parent Team  SOS! We need YOU and your cooking. Monday's Soup and Salad
STAFF Lunch needs more food contributions and parent volunteers! Sign up here.

Be sure to put our Feb. 29th Ice Skating Event on your calendar (Saturday 5:30 - 7:30 pm).
February 5 will be a busy day with a Principal's Coffee, PTA General Meeting, and Parent
Visitation Day rolled into one! Stay in touch by reading our FMS site council news (located on
our main web page and includes the Bond construction proposals) our district PTAC (also linked
on our FMS PTA page), and if you're still wanting more, our PAUSD Board of Ed meeting
agendas!

The Icing on the Cake!  Our newest little tiger cub Jacklyn Rose Dolmans was
born on 11/25 at 3:59pm and weighed in at 6 lbs 10 oz! Father and new assistant Principal
Dolmans is walking on clouds, and with Jacklyn currently sleeping through the night for 11 hours
he's getting some sleep too! "We're so in love with our baby girl" who is full of smiles when she
wakes up. Maybe our spirit wear should include some infant tiger booties and little tiger
sweatpants? Stay tuned for more updates on another tiger cub born recently. And students, ask
your parents, "Was I a good sleeper?" Your parents might score some extra points with you when
you hear the answer! PS: Do you think Jaclyn looks like a mini-Mr. Dolmans?? If you remember,

wish Mr. Dolmans congratulations! Babies are special (and each of us carries our former little
baby-self inside that still deserves celebrating now and then)!